

2002-2012: TEN YEARS OF SERVICE



- ▶ FELLOW PROFILES: KIMIYA AGHEVLI, WHITNEY SWANDER, BENJAMIN HOBBS, AND RJ KOSCIELNIAK .2&3
- ▶ ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: JOHN DAVID EVANS . . . 4
- ▶ AGENCY PROFILE: MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES 5
- ▶ TOUR OF CITIWATCH 5
- ▶ ORIOLE'S GAME. . 6
- ▶ MAYORAL FELLOW HAPPY HOUR . . . . . 7
- ▶ TEAM BUILDING AT THE PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER 8

## Criminal Justice in Baltimore

The word “jurisdiction” has its origins in the ways in which the law is said or proclaimed. The many ways in which the law is articulated was exhibited on July 10, 2012 when Mayoral Fellows and representatives from several critical city offices attended a luncheon at the DLA Piper law firm featuring State’s Attorney Greg Bernstein, Circuit Court Judge Barry Williams and Deputy Police Commissioner John Skinner. Each discussant brought their breadth of law enforcement experience to a conversation about the past, present and future of criminal justice in Baltimore City.

Deputy Police Commissioner Skinner, a 19-year veteran of the Baltimore City police department, is a senior leader managing a force that was responsible for 60,000 arrests in 2011. Skinner has received acclaim for supervising a new approach to law enforcement that reduced arrests from mid-2000 peaks of 100,000 annually while simultaneously rebuilding relationships with historically skeptical Baltimore neighborhoods. In his words, he believed, “there’s got to be a better way” to protect the citizens of Baltimore and relieve an overwhelmed system. The recent change in policing strategy meant a focus on the most violent offenders; this transition has reduced arrests and resulted in a significantly lower crime rate. Bernstein, in his post as the popularly-elected State’s Attorney, is



Continued on Page 3

# Mayoral Fellow Profiles



Kimiya Aghevli

Organizing and mobilizing others are a few of the skills that make Kimiya Rae Aghevli stand out amongst this summer's Fellows. A native of Washington, DC, Aghevli moved to Baltimore's Patterson Park neighborhood in 2006. During this time, she worked successfully in real estate brokerage. "I fell in love with Baltimore during this time, says Kimiya, "and although it faces many challenges, I realized it was open to innovation."

It was this sentiment, along with a passion to aid in the city's progress that got her involved with her neighborhood association. This led to her current position on the executive board of the Red Line Now Political Action Committee, aimed at gathering community support for the proposed transit-oriented development project.

It is no surprise that her community involvement has led to her current pursuit of a Master's in Public Policy from Johns Hopkins University, concentrating on urban and transportation policy. "My time in the Fellowship will help prepare me in my further studies and future career, and this has been a great experience!"

Under the guidance of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation, Kimiya is working on the School Crossing Guard Program, evaluating current practices and developing new ideas to ensure student safety. "I really enjoy working for DOT," says Kimiya. "The staff here has been very welcoming and I hope to continue relationships with this department long after the Fellowship."



Ben Hobbs

Born and raised outside Newark, NJ, Benjamin Hobbs feels right at home in the Baltimore community as it shares many characteristics and a similar vibe with his hometown. "This may be why I feel such a strong connection with Baltimore, and remained an area resident for the past several years," says Benjamin. With a lifelong passion for community growth and development, Benjamin entered the real estate field after graduating from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2003. He took a leap and started a short sale company to "give families the tools needed to stay in their homes long enough to sell without the devastating financial implications of a foreclosure."

This summer, Benjamin is working in the Department of Housing and Community Development, exploring alternatives to the current tax lien process. Through this project, he has had the opportunity to delve in to the logistics of the acquisition and disposition of City-owned properties. According to Benjamin, "this experience has given me a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationship between politics and the public-private partnership needed for sound policy."

Once he receives his Master Degree from the UMD in Real Estate Development, Benjamin plans to continue his career in real estate development. He anticipates that his focus will remain on revitalization and redevelopment in the Baltimore area.



# Mayoral Fellow Profiles Continued



Whitney Swander

After serving the Peace Corps in Madagascar and Ecuador, Whitney Swander is now committed to meeting the needs of the Baltimore community. Whitney arrived in Baltimore as a Shriver Peaceworker Fellow through the Masters in Public Policy (MPP) at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. The fellowship included two-years of work with the Department of Homeless Services for the city and the Mayoral Fellowship has allowed her to continue expanding this relationship. Her goal – a two-fold fellow – is to integrate ways to move the agency beyond the transitional housing model and towards one that recognizes how, “housing [for the homeless] needs to be permanent and the services need to be temporary.”

As an MPP student at UMBC she concentrates on advanced statistical analysis, she says, “I don’t want to crunch numbers for my life, but advanced methods will help me get a job.” Although she is a graduate student and recent Baltimore transplant she still finds time to explore the city and take advantage of the local farmers markets. She appreciates how these public events facilitate interaction between local shoppers and real farmers. More than anything, she is impressed with the friendliness and congeniality of Baltimore residents.

RJ Koscielniak



RJ Koscielniak describes himself as an “active participant, practitioner and public intellectual.” With an academic interest in exploring and understanding the inner working of urban cities and their inhabitants, RJ has a particular interest in America’s Rustbelt.

As a youth, RJ experienced life in a number of major US cities, moving frequently due to his father’s work. In St. Louis, RJ spearheaded the organization Open Closed, which serves as a community summit to address the issues of vacancy in neighborhoods and to engage with citizens and bring the perspectives of neighborhoods to the development circles. In its first year, Open Closed operated with a budget of \$65 and engaged about 700 community members; the following year through a community fundraising effort, Open Closed was operating with a budget of approximately \$15,000.

As a Mayoral Fellow, RJ is working with the Office of Planning in their “re-invigoration” effort of the Belair Road area. He has been honing his skills for community engagement, making frequent trips to the neighborhood, located in the northern part of the city, to engage with community residents and business owners and understand the type of transformation they would like to see in their community. RJ comes to the Mayoral Fellowship as a doctoral student in Urban Studied and Planning at Portland State University in Oregon, and was lured by the shorter-time frame of Baltimore’s program and the project-oriented focus of working with a single agency. RJ has enjoyed the immersion into the Office of Planning’s culture, but notes that this is “the first time I’ve had a 9-5 to job.” In the future, RJ sees himself living and working with his partner in one of the Rustbelt cities, particularly Detroit, Cleveland or New Orleans, “teaching, writing, welding or butchering.”

# Alumni Spotlight

## John David Evans



Code Stat Director  
Department of Public  
Works

**Where are you from?**  
Athens, GA

**What year were you in the fellowship?**  
Summer of 2011

**In which agency did you work?**

Department of Public Works, creating and planning incentive programs for communities to participate in storm water management.

**What was the most memorable part of the fellowship?** The weekly Speaker Series was the most memorable part, because I got the perspective from city leaders—both in- and outside government—on the city and why it works the way it does. The opportunity to make good connections was also invaluable, and opened the door to my current job.

**How has the fellowship affected your current career path?** I'm now working at the Department of Housing with Deputy Commissioner Braverman, with whom I met after my fellowship when an opportunity arose. I'm now the director of CodeStat, roughly the internal version of CitiStat for the Code Enforcement Division of Housing, working on data and policy analysis and advising.

**What is one recommendation you would give to current fellows?** Meet as many people as you can – people are busy but be bold and ask them for a fifteen minute discuss what they do, how they got where they are, etc. Whenever possible, pick up the phone instead of writing an email.

### Academic Background:

Bachelor of Arts:  
University of Georgia  
Economics  
(2003)

Masters:  
Public Policy with a  
certificate in Ecological  
Economics  
University of Maryland  
(2011)



# Citiwatch and Agency Spotlight



Over the course of two hours, key staff – Lt. Hood, Sergeant Grueninger and Detective McSpadden of the Baltimore City Police Department - introduced Mayoral Fellows to the Citiwatch program. Located in the basement floor of a west Baltimore tower, Citiwatch employs retired police officers to monitor live video feeds designed to highlight critical zones of the city. These monitors have the ability to communicate directly with street-level police patrols to identify and arrest suspects. Footage remains for twenty-eight days to ensure that officers have access to any recordings that may assist in an ongoing investigation.

Recognized for the ubiquitous blue lights in Baltimore City, the Citiwatch program has been heralded a model for its proactive approach to law enforcement. Launched in 2005 by then Mayor O'Malley, Citiwatch has expanded from an initial crop of 50 downtown cameras to a city-wide program that blankets Baltimore with 542 recording devices. Although the blue lights are being phased out as new camera technologies are utilized, the agency, headed by Lt. Hood, is stronger than ever and remains steadfast in its commitment to break the cycle of violence in Baltimore. With a mission to “safeguard life and property” Citiwatch has assisted in over 1,200 arrests and is slowly changing perceptions of what it means to protect Baltimore.

## Homeless Services Program

The Homeless Services Program, at present, falls within the Mayor's Office of Human Services after being adopted as a Mayoral Initiative in 2010, by Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. The mission of the Mayor's Office of Human Services is to “develop and implement an integrated system of support for vulnerable populations” and to this end, the Homeless Services Program serves “to make homeless a rare and brief experience in Baltimore City by serving as a catalyst for the creation of affordable housing, the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based services and community-wide advocacy.”

The Homeless Services Program serves as the administrative body for approximately \$40 million of Federal, State and Local funds for homeless services by partnering with approximately 50 service partners in Baltimore City to provide street outreach, drop-in centers, emergency shelter, transition housing, shelter plus care housing, permanent supportive housing, Housing Options for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), meal programs, rapid re-housing programs and eviction prevention to more than 25,000 individuals and families each year. The Homeless Services Program also serves as the Lead Agency for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Continuum of Care program, which operates as a year-round strategic planning body.

The Homeless Services Program also led a community-wide planning process which launched, The Journey Home: Baltimore City's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, in 2008. Partnering with the United Way of Central Maryland and a group of community professionals who compose the Mayor's Leadership Advisory Board on Homelessness, the Journey Home addresses the root causes of homelessness in Baltimore and proposes solutions through an expansion of affordable housing, comprehensive health care, ensuring sufficient incomes and the provision comprehensive preventive and emergency services for those immediately experiencing and at-risk of homelessness.

# Orioles Fever & Criminal Justice Continued

The Fellows had the quintessential Baltimore experience with a little extra pizzazz when they had the opportunity to see an Orioles' game from the Mayor's suite on July 13th. While the Detroit Tigers bested the Orioles, the Fellows were the real winners that evening, as everyone enjoyed good conversation and good food; a smorgasbord of hot dogs, barbeque, cornbread, salads and other delicious treats, including bags of peanuts, abounded. Broken bats and injuries on the field couldn't dampen the mood in the Fellows' perch above left-field. As high temperatures and humidity settled into the stands, the Fellows could take respite in the air-conditioned suite, sipping on cool beverages while watching the game below, in this iconic stadium.

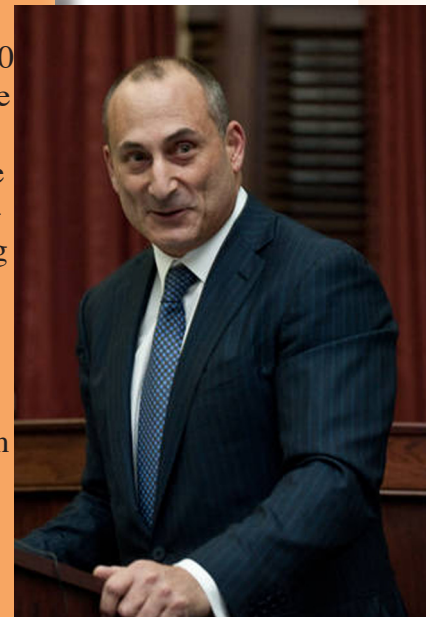
The Mayor's arrival at the box was an unexpected treat, and offered an opportunity for casual conversation in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. There was even a visit from Kiss Cam! As Chelsea Beaupre said, "I really enjoyed getting to experience the other fellows outside of a professional setting- and what could be more quintessentially "Baltimore" than a summer orioles game?" With summer projects passing the half-way point, time outside of the office to enjoy such a classic Baltimore tradition while catching up with the Fellows helped reinforce the personal and professional bonds formed this summer.



Continued from Page 1

responsible for prosecuting those arrested by the Baltimore police. Arriving in 2010 with a mission to clean-up the 200-prosecutor office, Bernstein has overseen a slate of innovations that has modified district attorney training programs and pioneered new models that match attorneys with police districts. While he has launched these initiatives, Bernstein is aware that "this is all meaningless if we're not able to produce outcomes that make Baltimore safer." After a tumultuous few years preceding his election, Bernstein is confident that the office is heading in the right direction. Williams, one of 33 judges constituting the Circuit Courts in Baltimore City (one of 24 in Maryland), recognizes the importance of judges as the neutral arbiter and the group that "makes the rulings that matter." The circuit court is responsible for hearing 50 cases a day, ranging from felony arraignments to misdemeanor cases. In 2011 alone, the court heard over 18,000 cases.

The 30-year low in Baltimore City crime and a sub-200 murder tally in 2011 constituted the core of the afternoon event, although each discussant editorialized on how criminal justice could be improved. Skinner acknowledged that there was no silver bullet to Baltimore's infirmities, but better relations between police and residents were vital. Bernstein advocated accelerated processes and better communication between police, prosecution and courts. Williams, maintaining his impartiality throughout, advised greater collaboration and a respect for the judicial process.



Greg Bernstein



# Mayoral Fellow Happy Hour



Fellows Ben Hobbs, Adam Jackson, and Krystle Okafor

What better way to relax on an early Friday evening than with the Mayoral Fellows at Talaras Happy Hour! The event, held on June 29th, was the first time that the Fellows were able to meet together outside of their offices in a social setting. The first few weeks have been a whirlwind, but the Fellows have been enjoying every moment, as they get started on their projects for the Summer. Adam Jackson, assigned to the Department of Parks and Recreation, says “It’s good to cool off after working these first few weeks.”

The Mayoral Fellows discussed their assigned departments for the summer and learned about each other’s interests. The informal setting was ideal for the Fellows to learn more about each other and their expectations from participating in the Fellowship. One theme was clear throughout every conversation: the diverse group of Fellows, with backgrounds ranging from urban planning to education, hope to improve the lives of the citizens within Baltimore City and its communities.

Of course, it would not truly be a happy hour without the wonderful tapas provided by this delightful Harbor East restaurant. Fellows enjoyed calamari, sushi, beef skewers, and the crowd favorite, chicken tostadas. “I am not only grateful for this great tasting food, but most importantly for being in the company of these Fellows with similar mindsets and great energy,” says Gena Upshaw, who is assigned to the Department of Public Works.

“The Mayoral Fellows are a remarkable group of talented people and I am honored to work amongst them“, says Benjamin Hobbs, assigned with the Department of Housing, Land Resources. “We all have a variety of backgrounds and education, but most importantly, we share a passion to use our individual talents to serve the needs of Baltimore City.”



# Team-building at Public Safety Center



## Upcoming Events:

July 24th  
Speaker Series:  
Baltimore Media

August 1st  
Baltimore's  
Westside Initiative

August 3rd  
Mayoral Fellow  
Alumni Networking  
Happy Hour

During the third week of the Mayoral Fellowship, the group commuted to the Baltimore City Public Safety Training Center on Northern Parkway for a Team-Building event. Not totally unfamiliar with team-building activities, the Fellows searched the Training Center's field for the low-ropes course challenges and trust-building activities we know from prior experience in team-building. It became immediately clear from the line of helmets and harnesses staged in front of the 50-foot tower that the challenge before us was to, face your fears and scale the tower. The officers that assisted us in the team-building activity, explained that the course was adopted as part of the Diamond Standard of the Baltimore City Police Academy, and that the force uses the tower monthly in its regular training exercises. Before the ascent, climbers are harnessed in and attached to a rope lead, suspended from the top of the tower and supported by a team-member on their ground throughout the climb. Once the climber reaches the top, the same team-member repels them back to the ground. The officers noted that the tower has proffered new ways to engage with the police crews through self-challenge. As for the Mayoral Fellows, our possible routes up were explained to us, and over the course of next few hours we all made an attempt at the tower. Although not a traditional team-building exercise, the afternoon in the blazing Baltimore sun, supporting our fellow Fellow's challenge themselves to climb the 50-foot structure, proved to be just the setting we needed to get to know each other better.



A Fellow climbs  
50 foot training  
tower.



## Credits

Writers: Whitney Swander, Kimiya  
Aghveli, Benjamin Hobbs, RJ Koscielniak  
Layout: Emiri Oda, intern